# Poetry.

## THE BUSTLE.

BY A MEMBER OF THE MARION LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

Haste, Venus! daughter of the purple wave,
Unveil on earth thy radiant charms no more.
Hie maid of beauty to thy coral cave,
Thy peerless reign, alas! too soon is o'er.
Nor longer now ye artless Graces rise,
Your forms in sweet perfection to display;
Love, grace, and beauty, with the goddess dies,
Since now *la mode* proclaims the "Bustle's" sway.

Hail Humpback'd muse! if such a muse there be,
Of Gods begat or of the briny sea.
List to my song, sweet goddess now attend,
And with my verse thy humpiest numbers blend.
From Helicon, or Parnassus' height,
Look o'er my page and guide my pen aright.
Tell me, ye daughters of the tuneful Nine,
If one of you e'er wore a hump behind?
Tell me ye sisters of the graceful Three,
If such a bump on one of you there be?
Oh say! sweet goddess of the nimble chase,
Does such a hump your outward woman grace
Proclaim it, mistress of the rosy morn,
Does such a hump your outward Eve adorn?
Speak, gentle Hebe, thou fairest of the fair,
And if a hump thou hast, sweet goddess tell us where.
Hail, beauteous Psyche! whom artless Nature blest,
With charms by far more perfect than the rest;
In praise of whom, both gods and men combine,
Say, lovely sprite, wearest thou a hump behind?
In vain, alas! the sculptor's god-like art,
Bids grace and beauty into being start!
In vain, he moulds the female form divine,
If Venus lacks an extra hump behind!
In vain, Apollo strikes the tuneful lyre,
And all the Muses in her praise conspire!
Even Poets sing 'mid Tempe's flowery maze,
And Gods combine to utter forth her praise!
Ah, no! 'mong all in vain I seek to find,
A maid who wears a shapeless hump behind.
Proclaim it, daughters of the tuneful choir,
And touch my song with notes of liquid fire,
Whilst now I sing of etiquette, the laws,
Extol *la mode*, and plead a "Bustle's" cause.

Hail, beauteous hump! mysterious bustle say!
Of flesh and blood, of rags, or bran, or hay,
Art thou composed, and dos't thou claim
A local situation and a name?
Say whence thou *sprung*, and what thy use and end,
And these I promise with my verse to blend.
Thou art, indeed, the pride of every belle,
Who delights at all to cut an extra *swell*,
And, by thy aid, secure the utmost honor
That feathers, rags or hay, can *heap* upon her.
I know of humps, at least a score in all,
Which have been worn from time immemorial:
To wit: the back, the shoulders; and 'tis said,
That humps abound upon the smoothest head.
Now, if from these paternity you claim,
Then tell me, pray! what is your proper name?
Some call thee "Bishop," "Bunkey," "*Tournure*,"
And others by at least a dozen more.
But now, forsooth myself will call thee "*Bustle*,"
Which means, you know, to frisk about and hustle,
Or move, at least, within so small a compass,
As not to raise a riot, row, or rumpus.

But these aside, in thee alone we find,
Love, grace and beauty, in one *heap* combin'd.
In thee alone, new beauties *rise* and live,
Which only art and etiquette can give.
Among the grave, the gay, the sad, or merry,
Each maid displays, a hump *la Dromedary;*
The rich, the poor, tho' duns and debts entrammel,
Are found equipped, *la a la mode de Camel.*
The young, the old, though long since *tired* of fashion,
Alike delight, the extra hump to lash on.
In truth, 'tis strange, the Gods should thus mistake,
And place such beauties on a Drome'y's back
When Venus sure, this mark of grace should claim,
And *raise* complete, her beauty, back, and fame.
Hail, wond'rous age! when Nature's perfect law
Resigns the contest to a bag of straw;
When fashion bold, embracing every whim,
Augments the form where Nature fain would trim,
And taste, as fickle as the fleeting wind,
Must needs attach an extra hump behind;
While youth and beauty, *bending* neath the load.
Becomes a martyr to the laws *de mode.*

But, spite of these, I'll plead a "Bustle's" cause,
Extol *la mode*, and emulate the laws,
The age, the custom, etiquette and taste,
The largest bustle, and the slenderest waist;
And if for these, I'm favored by the fair,
I'll add the grace, the manners and the air,
For all are written in that perfect code,
The Laws of Fashion, or in French *la mode.*

ORIE.

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From Graham's Magazine.

## THE QUAKERESS BRIDE;
### OR, THE FIRST STEP.

BY MRS. EMMA C. EMBURY.

"Well met, Harry," exclaimed Edward Morton, as he encountered his friend Wilford in Broadway; "I have two questions to ask you. In the first place, what do you call that odd-looking vehicle in which I saw you riding yesterday, and in the second, who was that pretty little sister Ruth seated so demurely beside you?"

"My new carriage," said Henry, laughing, "having been invented by myself has the honor to bear my name; it is called a Wilford; I will sell it to you cheap, if you like it, for that booby Danforth has ordered one of the same pattern, and I will never sport mine after he comes out with his."

"And so because a fool follows your lead, you throw up your cards; you will have enough to do if you carry out that rule in all your actions.—Thank you for your kind offer; but really I am neither rich nor fashionable enough to drive about town in such a Welsh butter-tub. Now, answer, my second question; who is the lady?—has she been named in honor of the vehicle?"

"No, but she will probably bear the name of its inventor in due time."

"Can it be possible, Harry? have you really determined to turn Benedict before the pleasures of freedom have palled upon your taste? Have you seriously reflected upon all you are about to relinquish? Have you thought upon the pleasant *tete-a-tetes*, the agreeable flirtations, the many delicious 'love passages' which the admired Harry Wilford is privileged to enjoy while he roves at large, but which will hereafter be denied to him who wears the clanking fetters of matrimony?"

"I have thought of every thing, Ned; and, to tell you the truth, I am beginning to get tired of the aimless, profitless life I now lead."

"And, therefore, you are going to turn merchant and marry; you will have a considerable amount to add to profit and loss by these experiments.—Pray who is the enchantress that has woven so wonderous a spell of transformation?"

"She bears the primitive name of Rachel, and was both born and bred in the little village of Westbury, where, as I am told, a fashionable cut coat or one of Leary's hats would be regarded as a foreign curiosity. She has never stirred beyond the precincts of her native place until this spring when she accompanied a newly-married relative to our gay city. Indeed she has been kept so strictly within the pale of her society, that if her cousin had not fortunately married out of it, the lovely Rachel would probably have walked quietly to meeting with some grave young broad-brim, and contented herself with a drab bonnet all her life."

"So your inamorata is country-bred. By Jupiter, I shall begin to believe in the revival of witchcraft. Is she rich, Harry?"

"I see the drift of your question, Ned; but you are mistaken if you think I have looked on her through golden spectacles. She is an orphan with sufficient property to render her independent of relatives, but not enough to entice a fortune-hunter."

"Well, if any one but yourself had told me that Harry Wilford, with all his advantages of *purse* and *person*, had made choice of a little rusticated Quakeress to be his bride, I could not have believed it," said Morton. "Pray do you expect this pretty Lady Gravely to preside at the exquisite dinners for which your bachelor's establishment has long been famous? or do you intend to forego such vulgar enjoyments for the superior pleasures of playing Darby to Mrs. Wilford's Joan in your chimney-corner?"

"No quizzing, Ned," said Wilford, smiling.—"Rachel has been well educated, and the staid decorum of the sect has not destroyed her native elegance of manner."

"But the *drab bonnet*, Harry:—can *you*, the pride of your tailor and the envy of your less tasteful friends,—*you*, the very prince of Broadway exquisites,—you, the American Brummel, who would as willingly have been caught picking a pocket as wearing a glove two days, a hat two weeks, or a coat two months,—can you venture to destroy the reputation which you have acquired at such cost, by introducing a drab bonnet to the acquaintance of your be-plumed and be-flowered female friends?"

"Wait awhile, Edward; Rachel has not yet learned to admire the gayeties of our city; her eyes have been too long accustomed to the 'sober twilight gray,' and she is rather dazzled than pleased with the splendor of fashionable society, but she has too much of womanly feelings to continue long insensible to womanly vanity."

"Well, success to you, Harry; but let me beg you to lay an interdict on that ugly bonnet as soon as you have a right to exercise your marital authority."

Wilford laughed, and the two gentlemen parted; the one to fulfil an engagement with the pretty Quakeress, and the other to smoke a cigar, drink a mint julep, and laugh at his friend's folly.

Harry Wilford had been so unlucky as to come into possession of a large fortune as soon as he attained his majority. I am not in error, gentle reader, when I say he was *unlucky*, for daily experience bears witness to the fact, that in this country, at least in nine cases out of ten, a large inheritance is a great misfortune. The records of gay life, in every large city, prove that the most useless, most ignorant, most vicious, and often the most degraded among the youth, are usually the sons of plodding and hoarding parents, who have pawned health, happiness, aye, and sometimes *integrity*—the very life of the soul—to procure the gold which brings the destruction of their children. Wilford had passed through college with the reputation of being one of the most gifted and most indolent of scholars, while his eccentric fits of study, which served to give him the highest rank in his class, only showed how much more he might have done, if industry and perseverance had been allowed to direct his pursuits. Like his career in the university, had been his course through life. With much latent energy of character, he was too infirm of purpose to become distinguished either for virtue or talent. The curse of Ephraim seemed to have fallen upon the child of prosperity, and the impressive words of the ancient Patriarch—"Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel"—might have showed forth his destiny. His fine talents were wasted in empty witticisms; his classical taste only served to direct his lavish expenditure, and his really noble feelings were frittered away in hollow friendship, or in transitory attachments.—Handsome, brilliant, and, above all, rich, he became the idol of a coterie, and intoxicated by the incense which smoked before him, he did not perceive that its subtle influence enervated all his nobler faculties. Yet Wilford had escaped the contagion of vice. The dark stain of criminal excess, which too often sullies the cloth of gold more deeply than it does the coat of frieze, had never fallen upon his garments. He could not forget the trembling hand which had been laid upon his infant head when he offered up his innocent prayers at a mother's knee. He remembered her dying supplication, that her child might be kept "unspotted from the world," and her gentle face, beaming with unutterable purity and love, often interposed itself between him and his tempter, when his heart would have failed from very weakness.

Harry Wilford had completed his thirtieth summer, and yet he was a bachelor. The artillery of bright eyes and brighter smiles had been levelled at him in vain; the gentler weapons of sweet words and often glances had been equally ineffectual. His heart had been captured again and again, but it was a far easier task to *gain* than to *keep* it. Indeed, it was like an ill-garrisoned border fortress, and generally surrendered at discretion to the first enemy that sat down before it, who was sure to be soon driven out in turn by another victorious assailant. He was too universal a lover, and until, like Apelles, he could unite in one woman the charms which he admired in twenty, there seemed little probability of his ever being won to wear the chain. The truth was, that of the many who courted the attentions of the handsome Mr. Wilford, there was none that seemed to have discovered the fine gold which lay beneath the surface of his character. The very exuberance of flowers and fruit which the soil produced prevented one from expecting any hidden treasure, for it is not often that the precious things of earth are found beneath its gay adornments. We look for the diamond, not under the bank of violets, but in the rugged bosom of the mountain, and thus Wilford's friends, content with the beautiful blossoms of fancy and wit which he lavishly flung around, suspected not the noble gifts of intellect which he possessed.

Wilford had frequently imagined himself in love, but something had always occurred to undeceive him, and to resolve his pleasant fancies with very disagreeable facts. He had learned that the demon of selfishness often lurks under the form of an angel of light, and he began to distrust many of the fair beings who bestowed upon him their gentle smiles. He had received more than one severe lesson in human nature, and it was very soon after officiating as groomsman at the bridal of a lovely girl whose faith had once been pledged to him, that he first met the young and guileless Quakeress. There was something so pure and vestal-like in the delicate complexion, soft blue eye, and simple braided hair of the gentle Rachel that Wilford was instantly charmed. His eye, so long dazzled with the gorgeous draperies, glittering jewels, and well-displayed beauties of fashionable belles, rested with a sense of relief on the sober French gray silk, and transparent lawn neckerchief which so carefully shaded the charms of the fair rustic. He saw the prettiest of tiny feet peeping from beneath a robe of far more decorous length than the laws of fashion then allowed—the whitest of white hands were unadorned by a single jewel—and the most snowy of necks was only discovered by the swan-like grace which rendered it visible above its envious screen of muslin. Even in the society of Friends, where a beautiful complexion is almost as common to the females as a pair of eyes to each face, Rachel was remarkable for the peculiar delicacy of hers. It was not of that waxy, creamy tint, so often considered the true fashionable and aristocratic complexion, because supposed to be an evidence that the "winds of heaven" have never visited the face except through the blinds of a carriage; or was it the flake-white and carmine-red which often claims for its possessor the reputation of a brilliant tincture of the skin. Even the old and worn-out similes of the lily and the rose, would have failed to give an idea of the delicate hues which added such a charm to Rachel's countenance; for the changing glow of her soft cheek, and the tracery of blue veins which adorned her snowy brow, could never be imaged by a flower of the field.—Harry Wilford thought he had never seen any thing so exquisitely lovely, so purely fair, as that sweet face when in perfect repose, or so vividly bright as it seemed when lighted by the blush of modesty. There are some faces which require shadows to perfect their beauty; the eye, though bright, must flash beneath jetty lashes, the brow, though white, must gleam amid raven tresses, or half the effect is lost. But Rachel's face, like that of joyous childhood, was all light. Her hair was silky and soft as an infant's, her eyes blue as the summer heaven, her lips like an opening rose-bud; it was a face like spring sunshine, all brightness and all beauty.

Rachel had been left an orphan in her infancy, and the relatives to whom she was indebted for her early nurture, were among the straitest of a strait sect; consequently, she had imbibed their rigid ideas of dress and manners. Indeed, she had never wasted a thought upon the pomps and vanities of the 'world's people,' until she visited the gay metropolis. The sneers which her plain dress occasioned in the circle where she now moved, and the merry jibes which young and thoughtless companions cast upon her peculiar tenets of faith, aroused all the latent pride of her nature, until she actually felt a degree of triumph in exhibiting her quaint costume in society.

If Wilford had been charmed with her beauty, he was in raptures with her unsophisticated character. After ringing the changes on *sentiment* until his feelings were like sweet bells jangled out of tune,' it was absolutely refreshing to find a damsel who had never hung enraptured over the passionate pages of Byron, nor breathed the voluptuous songs of Moore, but who, in the simplicity of her heart, admired and quoted the gentle Cowper, as the prince of poets. "She has much to learn in the heart's lore," said Wilford to himself, "and what pleasure it will be to develope her innocent affections." So he offered his hand to the pretty Quakeress, and she, little versed in the arts of coquetry, modestly accepted the gift.

One morning Rachel sat by the window, looking out upon the gay throng in Broadway, when her cousin entered with a small packet in her hand.

"Here is something for you, Rachel, a love token I suppose," said Mrs. Hadley. Rachel blushed as she opened the envelope, but her color deepened to an almost angry hue when she unclosed a morocco box, and beheld an exquisite set of pearls.

"Beautiful!" exclaimed Mrs. Hadley.

"I shall not keep them," said Rachel quietly.

"Not keep them, pray why?" asked her cousin.

"Because I should never wear them, and because Mr. Wilford has not kept his word with me. He promised never to interfere with what he called my style of dress, and I told him I would never lay aside my plain costume, though I was willing to modify it a little for his sake."

"Here he comes to answer for himself," said Mrs. Hadley as Wilford entered. "You are just in time," she continued, "for Rachel is very angry with you."

Rachel could not repress a feeling of pride and pleasure as she looked on the graceful form of her lover, who, taking a seat beside her, whispered "Are you indeed displeased with me, dearest? Pray what is my offence?"

She replied by placing in his hand the box of pearls.

"Do you then reject so simple an offering of affection, Rachel?" said Harry; "you should not regard those gems as the vain ornaments of fashion, but as the most delicate and beautiful productions of the wonderful world of ocean. Look, can anything be more emblematical of purity."—And as he spoke he placed a pearl rose upon the soft golden hair which was folded above her white forehead.

Rachel did look, and, as the large mirror reflected her beautiful face, she was conscious of an impulse, (almost her very first) of womanly vanity.

"I cannot wear them, Harry," said she, 'necklace and bracelets would be very useless to one who never unveils either neck or arms, and such costly head-gear would be ill suited to my plain silk dress, and lawn cape."

Wilford had too much tact to press the subject. The box was consigned to his pocket, and the offence was forgiven.

*Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute,"* said he as he walked home, "my fifteen hundred dollars have been thrown away for the present; I must proceed more cautiously in my work of reform."

The morning fixed for the marriage at length arrived. Rachel was in her apartment, surrounded by her friends, and had just commenced her toilet, when a small parcel, accompanied by a delicate rose-colored note, was placed in her hands. She, of course, opened the note first; it was as follows:

"Forgive me, my sweet Rachel, if on this morning, I venture to suggest a single addition to your simple dress. There are always idle persons standing about the church door on such an occasion as a wedding, and I am foolish enough to be unwilling that the careless eye of every indifferent spectator should scan the exquisite beauty of your face to-day. There is something extremely painful to me in the thought that the blushing cheek of my fair bride should be the subject of cold remark. Will you not, for my sake, dearest, veil the rich treasure of your loveliness for one brief hour? I know I am selfish in making the request, but for once forgive my jealousy, and shade your brightness from the stranger's gaze."

The parcel contained a Brussels lace veil of surpassing richness, as delicate in its texture, so magnificent in its pattern, that Rachel could not repress an exclamation of pleasure at the sight.

Her toilet was at length completed. A dress of plain white satin, finished at the neck by a chemisette of simple lace, her hair folded plainly around her small head and plaited in a single braid behind: such was the bridal attire of the rigid little Quakeress.

"And the veil, Rachel," whispered her cousin.

"Why, rather than shock Harry's delicacy," said she, half smilling, "I believe I will wear it, but I shall look very ridiculous in it."

The veil fell in rich folds nearly to her feet, and nothing could be imagined more beautiful than her whole appearance in this plain but magnificent costume.

"You want a pearl comb, or something of the kind, to fasten this veil properly," said one of the bridesmaids.

"What a pity you had not kept the box," whispered her cousin. Rachel smiled as she replied. "If I had ever dreamed of wearing such an unusual appendage as this, perhaps I might have retained the rose at least."

Rachel had taken the first step when she consented to adopt the veil; the second would have cost her less trouble.

Immediately after the ceremony, Mr. and Mrs. Wilford set off for the Springs. A servant had preceded them with their baggage, and Rachel soon found herself in the midst of a more brilliant circle than she had yet seen. The day after their arrival she was preparing for a ride, and a crowd had collected on the piazza to admire Wilford's elegant equipage and fine blood-horses. But an unforseen annoyance had occurred to disturb the bride's feelings. Attired in a dress of dark lavender-colored silk, she folded her white cashmere around her shoulders, and opened the band-box which contained her bridal hat. This had only been sent home on the morning of her marriage, and having been instantly forwarded with the other baggage, she had not yet seen it. How was she startled therefore, to find, instead of the close cottage hat which she had ordered, as the nearest possible approach to her Quaker bonnet, a gay looking French affair, trimmed with a wreath of lilies of the valley? What was to be done? It was impossible to procure another, and to despoil the bonnet of its flowers gave it an unfinised and slovenly appearance. Harry affected to condole with her, and finally persuaded her to wear it, rather than expose herself to the charge of affectation by assuming her travelling calash.

*"Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute,"* said he, to himself, as he saw the blush mantle her lovely cheek when she contemplated her reflection in the mirror.

"What shall I do?" exclaimed Rachel, "it does not half cover my head; I never wore such a flaunting, flaring thing in my life: I wish I had my veil, for I am actually ashamed of myself: ah, here it is, coz must have put it into the box, and I dare say it is she who has played me this trick about my bonnet."

So, throwing on her splendid veil to hide her unwonted finery, Rachel took her husband's arm and entered the carriage, leaving the gentlemen to admire her beauty, and the ladies to talk about her magnificent Brussels.

Six months after her marriage, Mrs. Wilford was dressing for a party; Monsieur Frisette had arranged her beautiful hair in superb ringlets and braids, and was just completing his task, when the maid accidentally removing her embroidered handkerchief from the dressing-table, discovered beneath it the box of pearls.

"Ah voila Madam, de very ting—dat leetle rose vill just do for fix dese curl," said Monsieur.

As she continued her toilet, she found that Madame M——had trimmed the corsage of her dress in such a manner as to preclude the possibility of wearing either cape or scarf according to her usual habit. She could not appear with her neck quite bare, and nothing remained but to cover it with the massy medallions of her pearl necklace. In short, when fully dressed for the party, some good reason had been found for adopting every ornament which the box contained.

"Just as I expected," said Wilford, mentally, as he conducted her to the carriage; "Rachel has taken the *first step:* she will never put on the drab bonnet again."

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Three years after the event just recorded, the fatal red flag of the auctioneer was seen projecting from one of the upper windows of a stately house, and crowds of the idle, the curious, and the speculating were entering the open door. It was the residence of Harry Wilford.

"Well, how things will turn out," said a fat, frowsy dame, as she seated herself on a velvet sofa, and drew a chair in front of her to keep off the throng. "Sit down, Charlotte," continued she, addressing a newly married niece, "sit down, and let us make ourselves comfortable until the auctioneer has done selling the kitchen furniture.—Only think—the last time I was here before, Mrs. Wilford had a great party, and the young folks all came in fancy dresses, and I sat on this very sofa. That was only three months ago, and now every thing has gone to rack and ruin."

"How did it all happen?" added a pleasant looking woman who stood near.

"Oh, Mrs. Wilford was awfully extravagant, and her husband thought there was no bounds to his riches, so they lived too fast; 'burnt their candle at both ends,' as the saying is. They say Mrs. Wilford hurried on her husband's ruin, for he had been speculating too deeply, and was in debt, but his creditors would have waited if she had not given that last dashing party."

"How do you know that fact?" asked the other.

"Oh, from the best authority—my husband is one of the principal creditors," replied the dame with a look of dignity; "he told me the whole story as we were going to the party, and declared that he would not stand such dishonest dealings: so the very next morning he was down upon Mr. Wilford, and before twelve o'clock he had compelled him to make an assignment."

And it was among such people—men and women who would sit at the hospitable board with murder in their hearts—who would share in the festivities of a household even while meditating the destruction of that pleasant home—it was among such as these that Wilford had lived—it was for such as these that he had striven to change the simple habits and artless manners of his true-hearted Rachel. It was the dread laugh of such as these which had led him to waste her energies as well as his own, in the pursuit of fashion and folly.

Wilford had succeeded even beyond his intentions in imbuing his gentle bride with a love for worldly vanities. Her wishes delicately but earnestly expressed, together with the new-born vanity which her unwonted adornments engendered in the bosom of Rachel, gradually overcame her early habits. One by one the insignia of her simple faith were thrown aside. Her beautiful neck was unveiled to the admiring eye—her ungraceful sleeve receded until the rounded arm was visible in its full proportions—the skirt, following the laws of fashion lost several degrees of longitude, until the beauty of Mrs. Wilford's foot was no longer a disputable fact. In short, in little more than two years after her marriage, her wealth, her beauty, her elegance of manners, and her costly dress, made her decidedly a leader of ton. Wilford could not but regret the change. She was ever affectionate and devoted to him with all the earnestness of womanly tenderness, but he was ashamed to tell her that in obeying his wishes she had actually gone beyond them. He hoped that it was only the novelty of her position which had thus fascinated her, and yet he often found himself regretting that he had ever exposed her to such temptations.

But new and unlooked-for trials were in store for both. The estate of Mr. Wilford had always been managed by his uncle, a careful merchant, who, through the course of his whole life, had seemed to possess the Midas-like faculty of converting every thing he touched into gold; and satisfied that, as he was the old man's only heir, the property would be carefully husbanded, Wilford gave himself no trouble about the matter. But the mania for real estate speculation had now infected the whole nation. The old gentleman found himself the ridiculed of many a bold spirit who had dashed into the stream and gathered the gold dust which it bore along; he had long withstood the sneers of those who considered themselves wise in their generation, because they were pursuing a gambling scheme for wealth; but at length he could no longer resist the influence! He obtained the concurrence of his nephew, and thus furnished with double means struck boldly out from the safe haven where he had been ensconced. Every thing went on swimmingly for a time; his gains were immense, *upon paper*—but the tide turned, and the result was a total wreck.

It was long ere Wilford became aware of his misfortunes. Accustomed to rely implicitly on his uncle's judgment, he reposed in indolent security until the tidings of the old man's bankruptcy and his own consequent ruin came upon him like a thunder-bolt. He had been too long the child of prosperity to bear reverses with fortitude. He had no profession, no knowledge of business, nothing by which he could obtain a future livelihood; and now, when habits of luxury had enervated both mind and body, he found himself utterly beggared. He brooded over his losses in moody bitterness of spirit long before the world became acquainted with his situation. He even concealed them from his wife, from that mistaken and cruel kindness which thinks to lighten the blow by keeping it long suspended. "How can I overwhelm her with sorrow and mortification by telling her we are beggars?" he cried, in anguish. "How can I bid her descend from the lofty eminence of wealth and fashion and retire to obscurity and seclusion? How can I be sure that she will bear the tidings with a patient spirit? I have sown within her young heart the seeds of vanity, and how can I hope to eradicate now, the evils which have sprung from them? Her own little fortune is all that is now left, and how we are to live on that I cannot tell. Rachel cannot bear it—I know she cannot?"

His thoughts added new anguish to his regrets, and months of harrowing dread and anxiety passed away, before Wilford could summon courage to face manfully his increasing misfortunes.

Mrs. Wilford had long intended to celebrate her husband's birth-day by a brilliant party, and, quite unconscious of the storm which impended over her, she issued her cards nearly a month previous to the appointed evening. Harry Wilford knew that the party ought not to be given; he knew that it would bring a discredit to him, and perhaps censure upon his wife, for he was conscious that his affairs were rapidly approaching a fatal crisis; but he had not courage to own the truth. He watched the preparations for the party with a boding spirit; he looked sadly and fondly upon the brilliant attire of his young wife as she glided apout the gorgeous apartments, and he felt that he was taking his last glance at happiness and comfort. The very next day the principal creditor, a fat, oily-faced, well-fed individual, remarkable for the regularity of his attendance, and the loudness of his responses at church—a man whose piety was carried to such lengths that in the fear lest his left hand should know the good which his right hand did, he was particularly careful not to do *any*—a man who would first sit at a feast and store up the careless sayings of convivial frankness to serve his own interest in the mart and the market place—this man, after pledging him in the wine-cup, and parting from him with the cordial grasp of friendship, met him with a legal edmand for that which he knew would ruin him.

The fatal tidings could no longer be withheld from Mrs. Wilford, and she was roused from the langor which the fatigue of the preceding evening had left both on mind and body, by the tidings of her husband's misfortunes.

"It is as I feared," thought Wilford, as he observed her overwhelming emotion, "she cannot bear the degradation."

But he was mistaken. There is a hidden strength of character, which can only be developed by the stroke of calamity, and such was possessed by Rachel Wilford. A moment, and but a moment, she faltered; then she was prepared to brave the worst evils of her altered fortunes. Wilford soon found that she had both mind to comprehend and judgment to council. Ere the morrow had passed, half his sorrow was assuaged, for he had found comfort and even hope in the bosom of his young and devoted wife. There was only one thing over which she still deeply grieved, and this was her fatal party.

"Had you only confided in me, Harry," said she, "worlds would not have tempted me to place you and myself in so dishonorable a light. How could you see me so unconscious of danger, and treading so heedlessly on the verge of ruin, without withdrawing me from it? Your own good name, Harry, aye, and *mine* too, have suffered.—Our integrity has been doubted."

"I did it for the best, Rachel; I would have spared you as long as possible."

"It was most ill-judged kindness, Harry; it has ruined you and deeply injured me. Believe me, a wife is infinitely happier in the consciousness that she possesses her husband's confidence, than in the discovery that she has been treated like a petted child; a being of powers too limited to understand his affairs or to be admitted to his councils."

Mrs. Wilford did not merely meet her reverses with fortitude. She was resolved to act as became a high minded woman. Her jewels were immediately disposed of, not stealthily, and as if she dreaded exposure, but by going openly to the persons from whom they were purchased; and thus realizing at least two-thirds of their original cost. The sum she immediately appropriated to household debts; and with it she satisfied the claims of all those who supplied them with daily comforts. "I could not rest," she said, "if I felt there was one person living who might say I wronged him out of the very bread I have eaten." The furniture was next given up; nothing was reserved—not even the plate presented by her own friends, nor the work-box, the gift of Harry. Lodgings quiet and respectable, but plain and cheap, were taken in a private boarding house. Every vestige of their former splendor was gone, and when all was over, it was with a feeling of relief that the husband and wife sat down together to form plans for the future. The past seemed like a troubled dream.—Scarcely six months had elapsed since their stately mansion had been the scenes of joyous festivity, and the very suddenness with which distress had come, seemed to have paralyzed their sense of suffering.

"I received a proposal to-day, Rachel, which I would not accept without consulting you," said Harry, as they sat together in their neatly-furnished apartment. "Edward Morton offers me the situation of book-keeper, with a salary of a thousand dollars per annum."

"Take it, by all means, dear Harry," said his wife; constant employment will make you forget your troubles, and a thousand dollars," added she, with a bright smile, "will be a fortune to us."

"I suppose I had better accept his offer," said Wilford gloomily, "but it cuts down a man's pride to be reduced to the condition of a hireling."

"Do not make me ashamed of my husband, dear Harry," was the earnest reply; "do not suffer me to blush for the weakness and false pride which can think only of external show. We can live very confortably on your salary, especially when we have the consciousness of integrity to sweeten our privations."

"You forget that you are not quite so much a beggar as your husband, Rachel. The interest of your twenty thousand dollars, added to my salary, will give us something more than the mere comforts of life."

"What do you mean, Harry?" asked his wife, turning very pale.

"Why, you do not suppose I was scoundrel enough to risk your little property, Rachel; that was secured you by a marriage settlement, and no creditor can touch it unless you should assign it."

Rachel made no reply, but fell into a long *fit o* musing.

It was but a few days after this conversation, that Wilford, conquering his false pride, entered upon his duties in the counting-room of his old friend Morton. He returned early in the evening, wearied, sad, and dispirited; but his wife met him with a face so bright, that he almost forgot the annoyances of the day.

"How happy you look, Rachel," said he, as she drew her chair beside his, and laid her hand upon his arm.

"I am indeed happy, dear Harry, for I am now no richer than yourself."

"I don't understand you," replied Wilford, with a puzzled look.

"You gave me a most unpleasant piece of news the other day, Harry, when you told me that my paltry little fortune had been preserved from your creditors, and now I am happy in the consciousness that no such reproach can attach to us. I have been closeted with your lawyer this morning; he told me about twenty thousand dollars would clear off all claims against you, and by this time I suppose you are free."

"What have you done?"

"Handed over my marriage settlement to your assignees Harry"—

"And reduced yourself to a bare subsistence, Rachel, to satisfy a group of gaping creditors, who would swallow my last morsel if they knew I was left to starve."

"The debts were justly due, Harry, and I would rather that the charge of illiberality should attach to them, than of dishonesty to us."

"You have never known the evils of poverty, my poor child," said Wilford, despondingly.

"Nor do I mean to experience them now, dear husband; you will not let me want for comforts, and you seem to forget that, though you have tried to spoil me, my early habits were those of economy and frugality."

"So you mean to adopt your simple Quaker habits again, Rachel," said Wilford, more cheerfully; "will they include the drab bonnet also?"

"No," returned the young wife, her face dimpled with joyous smiles; "I believe now, that as much vanity lurked under my plain bonnet, as ever sported on the wave of a jewelled plume, and yet," said she, after a moment's pause, "when I threw off my Quaker garb, I took my first step in error; for I can trace all my folly, and extravagance, and waste of time, to the moment when I first looked with pleasure in that little mirror at Saratoga."

"Well, well, dearest, your first step has not led you so far astray but that you have been able most nobly to retrace your path. I am poorer than I ever expected to be, yet richer than I could ever have hoped; for had I never experienced a reverse of fortune, I should never have learned the worth of my own sweet wife."

Henry Willford was right; and the felicity which he now enjoys in his own quiet and cheerful home—a home won by his own industry and diligence—is well worth all the price at which it was purchased, even though it cost him his whole estate.

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